

# 6

## Religion, peace and conflict

### 6.1

### Introduction to religion, peace and conflict

#### Research activity

Listen to 'The Grave' by Don McLean or find and read the lyrics. Write down your thoughts about what you have heard or read.

Right from the beginnings of human life, people have attempted to gain territory or settle disputes through fighting. Even as you read these words, somewhere in the world people are being killed as part of a **war**. While all countries have laws against murder, the rules of war are different – in war, killing is considered to be acceptable.



▲ This war scene from Assyria was made around 2700 years ago

While the Christian Church may speak out against killing, and the teachings of Jesus do not support it, many Christians have been prepared to fight for their country or their faith. But there are also many Christians who disagree with war and try to prevent it from happening. For example, Quakers will never take part in a war, regardless of the reasons for it.

There are four key concepts that you need to understand about Christian beliefs towards war: peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

#### ■ Peace

One definition of **peace** is the absence of war. The intention of those fighting in a war is to create peace once the war is over. But this is often difficult to achieve, as the instability and resentment left after a war often leads to fighting breaking out again.

Peace can also be thought of as a feeling of happiness, wellbeing and tranquility. This may come through religious faith, especially in prayer

#### Objectives

- Understand war as a way of resolving differences.
- Explain the key concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

#### Key terms

- **war:** fighting between nations to resolve issues between them
- **peace:** an absence of conflict, which leads to happiness and harmony
- **justice:** bringing about what is right and fair, according to the law or making up for a wrong that has been committed
- **forgiveness:** showing grace and mercy and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong
- **reconciliation:** a sacrament in the Catholic Church; also, when individuals or groups restore friendly relations after conflict or disagreement

#### Discussion activity

Do you think Christians should be involved in fighting wars or should they try to find alternative ways of solving disputes?

#### ★ Study tip

The four concepts are linked. When writing about one of them, it is likely that you may need to refer to at least one other.



and meditation. Such peace brings a calmness that helps to avoid quarrels and disputes with other people.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah looks forward to a time when God will bring peace:

“ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. ”

*Isaiah 2:4 [NIV]*

## Justice

Many wars are fought to achieve **justice**. The quote above from Isaiah looks forward to a time when God, as the ultimate judge, will establish justice between nations and settle their disputes.

Justice is often linked with equality. If people are not given the same opportunities, this may be seen as unfair (or unjust) and lead to resentment. This could lead to conflict, especially if more privileged parts of the world are seen to be the cause of the inequality.

## Forgiveness

Christians believe that **forgiveness** is important for living peacefully. It does not necessarily mean that no action should be taken to right a wrong. But once the wrong is righted, possibly through conflict, forgiveness should follow. Action to establish peace and justice should follow the act of forgiveness, otherwise it is likely that problems will reoccur. Christians believe that God sets the example regarding forgiveness, by offering forgiveness himself to all who ask for it in faith.

## Reconciliation

**Reconciliation** follows conflict. In March 2013, when talking about conflict between France and Mali, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said:

“ We are in the process of winning the war. We also have to win the peace. And winning the peace involves a whole series of acts to help democracy and development. ”

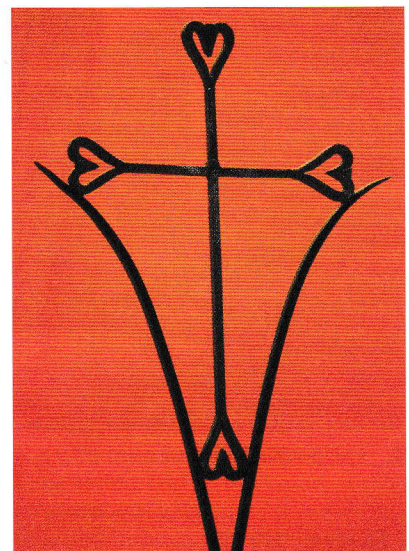
*Laurent Fabius*

This quote illustrates the meaning of reconciliation. It is more than just apologising: it involves a conscious effort to rebuild a relationship, and sometimes much work is needed to ensure there is no more conflict.

While the concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are important in the aftermath of a war, they can also be important alternatives to war. For example, Quakers believe we should use these concepts as tools for preventing conflict from happening in the first place. The Quakers are a Christian denomination committed to pacifism.

## Activities

- 1 Explain the four concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 2 Explain how these four concepts link together in the context of a war and what happens after a war.
- 3 Look at the image of the cross from Taize, which represents Christian reconciliation. How would you represent Christian reconciliation? Create a symbol or design that you think achieves this.



▲ The cross from the Church of Reconciliation in Taize, France

## Links

Find out more about pacifism and its meaning on pages 136–137.

## Summary

You should now be aware that war is one way of resolving differences, and that concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are important, particularly after a war ends.



## 6.2

# Violent protest and terrorism

### ■ Violence and protest

The right to **protest** is considered to be a fundamental democratic freedom. The law in the UK allows individuals and groups to protest in public to demonstrate their point of view. If the protest involves a procession or a march, the police must be told at least six days before it takes place. The police can request alterations to the route or even apply to a court for an order to ban the march. They may do this if they feel that the march might intimidate other people or if they predict that **violence** will be involved.



▲ A protester in London smashes a window during a protest in 2011

### Riots, 2011

While the right to protest peacefully is protected in the UK, there is no right to protest violently. An unplanned protest that descends into violence is called a riot. In 2011, there was rioting in London and other towns and cities in the UK, sparked by the police shooting dead a local man in Tottenham. A peaceful march in response to the shooting took place, but it was followed by rioting, looting and criminal damage as other people took advantage of the situation across the country. After everything cooled down, it was the work of the local authorities, police, community leaders and faith groups, including local churches, to seek to repair the divisions between people caught up in the riots.

Peaceful protest was an important part of the Civil Rights movement in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the movement's leaders, a Christian pastor called Dr Martin Luther King Jr, organised peaceful rallies to protest about racial and social inequalities. Even though King was assassinated in 1968, the peaceful methods adopted by the Civil Rights movement proved successful, and equal rights legislation was

### Objectives

- Understand UK law regarding protesting.
- Understand terrorism as a means of conflict.
- Understand Christian beliefs about violent protest and terrorism.

### Key terms

- **protest:** an expression of disapproval, often in a public group
- **violence:** using actions that threaten or harm others
- **terrorism:** the unlawful use of violence, usually against innocent civilians, to achieve a political goal

### Contrasting beliefs

What do other religions teach about violence? Choose one and use the Internet or the library to find a contrasting belief on violence from another religion.

### Activities

- 1 Suggest some issues that it may be justified to protest peacefully about in contemporary British society. Explain why.
- 2 Do you think violent protest is ever justified? Explain why.

### Links

For more on Martin Luther King Jr turn to page 167.



passed into US law. Martin Luther King's peaceful protests reflect the belief shared by many Christians that protest to achieve what is right is acceptable, provided violence is not used.

### Religious beliefs about violence

No religion promotes violence in their teachings, and all are generally agreed that conflict should be avoided if at all possible. Religions have some slightly different teachings on when violence and conflict may be justified. You will learn more about Christian justifications for violence and war in the following pages of this book.

### Terrorism

A much more serious form of violent protest is **terrorism**. This is where an individual, or a group who share certain beliefs, use terror as part of their campaign to further their cause. Their violence usually deliberately targets civilian and takes place in public. Suicide bombers, car bombs, and gunmen shooting into crowds of people are all tactics of terrorism. Terrorists believe that by killing people in this way, the rest of society will become more aware of their cause, will be scared of them and push the authorities into giving way to their demands.

A terrorist may associate their cause with a religion, including Christianity, but no religion promotes terrorism. Most Christians consider terrorist acts of violence to be wrong, especially as the victims are usually innocent people going about their normal daily business. They prefer more peaceful ways of resolving issues.

“The purpose of terrorism lies not just in the violent act itself. It is in producing terror. It sets out to inflame, to divide, to produce consequences which [terrorists] then use to justify terror.”

*Former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair*

### KING'S CROSS ST. PANCRAS UNDERGROUND STATION



### Summary

You should now understand UK law regarding protest. You should also understand the concept of terrorism and why most Christians do not support either violent protest or terrorism.

### Links

To read more about Christian teachings on violence and war turn to pages 128–129.

### Activities

- 1 Explain how terrorists attempt to bring about the changes they want.
- 2 How do you think Christians should respond to terrorism?

### ★ Study tip

When writing about terrorism, try not to let your feelings change the way you write and the language you use, even when you are analysing or evaluating.

### Discussion activity

In a small group, discuss the quote from Tony Blair. What is he saying, and do you agree with him? Explain why. Is there anything you would like to add to the quote to make it clearer or better?

◀ In the aftermath of the suicide bombings that happened in London on 7 July 2005, representatives from various religions shared platforms to speak out in solidarity against terrorism



## 6.3

# Reasons for war

Some people find it very difficult to understand why anyone is prepared to fight in a war or why their country wants to go to war. However, it is a fact that people are willing to fight in wars in great numbers. Whenever the UK is involved in war, both full-time and volunteer personnel are called upon to fight. During the First and Second World War, the need for fighters was so great and casualties were so high that people in the UK were ordered to fight for their country.

### ■ Greed as a reason for war

Throughout history, war has been used as a way to gain more land or territory, or even to regain land lost in a previous war. **Greed** can also lead countries to invade others in order to control important resources, such as oil. In this way, rich and powerful countries can get richer and more powerful, potentially causing poverty in the defeated country when their main source of income is taken away.

Christianity warns against greed. The Bible says:

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

1 Timothy 6:10 [NIV]



▲ Some believe that the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003 was more to do with gaining control of oil reserves than politics

### ■ Self-defence as a reason for war

Whenever one country attacks another, it expects to meet some resistance from the invaded country. Most people consider fighting in **self-defence** to be morally acceptable, and believe they have a right to defend the values, beliefs and ways of life that their country lives by.

#### Objectives

- Understand why wars are fought.
- Understand Christian attitudes towards the reasons for war.

#### Key terms

- **greed:** selfish desire for something
- **self-defence:** acting to prevent harm to yourself or others
- **retaliation:** deliberately harming someone as a response to them harming you

#### ★ Study tip

If you choose to refer to 1 Timothy 6:10, remember that it refers to the love of money (that is, greed) rather than just money itself. Referring just to money gives an incorrect meaning from that intended.

#### Activities

- 1 Explain greed, self-defence and retaliation as causes of war.
- 2 Explain which (if any) of these reasons you think is justifiable.
- 3 Which of these reasons (if any) do you think Christians would agree with? Explain why.



During the Second World War the UK fought to defend itself against Nazi invasion and also to help defeat what they saw as an evil threat to the whole of Europe. In addition to defending their own country, many people believe it is acceptable to fight to defend other nations under threat.

While there is little in the New Testament to justify the idea of fighting in self-defence, an argument can be made for it provided all other ways of solving the problem have been attempted and have failed.

### Links

For more information about situations when war might be justified, see pages 132–33.

## Retaliation as a reason for war

### Invasion of Afghanistan

On 11 September 2001, terrorists from al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger aircraft in the US. Two were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, and one into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the US Department of Defence). The fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania after the passengers tried to overcome the hijackers. The total death toll was 2996, with many survivors suffering great trauma that has affected their lives ever since.

In what some saw as an act of retaliation the US government ordered military action against Afghanistan because they believed that the country was providing shelter for the al-Qaeda terrorist group and its leader Osama bin Laden. The UK provided military personnel to support the US action. In all, 454 British military personnel died in the Afghanistan campaign. Eventually, bin Laden was killed by US forces in May 2011.

Although many people believed that al-Qaeda needed to be prevented from undertaking such terrorist activity, invading Afghanistan was seen by some to be an unwelcome act of retaliation.



▲ The second of the twin towers is attacked and destroyed

“ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. ... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ”

*Romans 12:17–19 [NIV]*

Wars are sometimes fought in retaliation against a country that is seen to have done something very wrong. When Jesus was asked about retaliation, he gave this advice:

“ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ”

*Matthew 5:39 [NIV]*

Although many Christians are able to follow this advice in much of their daily interaction with other people, when it comes to situations of war, they find it much more difficult.

### Summary

You should now understand three different causes of war and Christian attitudes towards them.

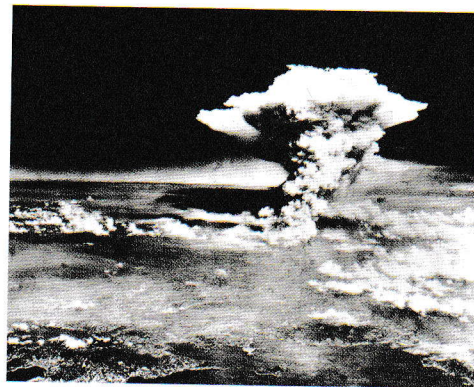


## 6.4

# Nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction

### The use of nuclear weapons

This picture was taken just after around 60,000 people in the Japanese city of Hiroshima died as the result of an atom bomb (an early form of **nuclear weapon**) being dropped on it by US forces fighting in the Second World War. The death toll rose to around 140,000 in the months that followed as many more died as a result of radiation. Three days later, a second Japanese city, Nagasaki, was also destroyed by an atom bomb. Six days after that Japan surrendered and ceased fighting against the allied forces. This effectively marked the end of the Second World War, which for some people justified the use of these weapons.



▲ The Japanese city of Hiroshima shortly after an atom bomb was dropped on it on 6 August 1945

Since the end of the Second World War, many of the wealthier countries in the world, including the UK, have researched and developed considerably more powerful nuclear weapons. Despite some countries agreeing to reduce the number of nuclear weapons they possess, there are now enough to completely destroy the world we live in several times over.

The usual justification for nuclear weapons is that they prevent world wars from occurring due to the fear of the consequences of nuclear escalation. Defenders of nuclear weapons would point out as proof of their effectiveness the relative peace within Europe since the Second World War. Some Christians believe that the problem with nuclear weapons is not the devices themselves, but their use.

It is a fundamental Christian belief that as the creator, only God has the authority to end the life that he created. One of the Ten Commandments states 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:13). Some Christians believe that the use of nuclear weapons which would kill huge numbers of innocent civilians can never be justified.

Speaking on behalf of four UK churches, policy adviser Steve Hucklesby said:

“Faith groups in the UK are united in their conviction that any use of nuclear weapons would violate the sanctity of life and the principle of dignity core to our faith traditions.”

Steve Hucklesby

### Objectives

- Know about different weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.
- Understand the possible implications of using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, and consider whether the use of such weapons is justified.

### Key terms

- **nuclear weapons:** weapons that work by a nuclear reaction; they devastate huge areas and kill large numbers of people
- **weapons of mass destruction:** weapons that can kill large numbers of people and/or cause great damage
- **chemical weapons:** weapons that use chemicals to poison, burn or paralyse humans and destroy the natural environment
- **biological weapons:** weapons that have living organisms or infective material that can lead to disease or death

### ★ Study tip

When using a quotation to support an idea, try to make sure it is relevant and that your interpretation of it is correct.

### Discussion activity

Do you think that dropping atom bombs on two Japanese cities, which effectively caused the Second World War to end, was justifiable?

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## Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

The Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND) is a group of Christians in England who are attached to the larger Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). The intention of the CCND is to support the Abolition 2000 campaign, which aims to 'achieve for the twenty-first century a signed agreement committing the world to the permanent elimination of nuclear weapons according to a fixed timetable.' They produce regular newsletters, organise events to raise awareness of their campaigns, and promote the need to pray for peace and nuclear disarmament.



▲ The CCND at a demonstration

### ■ Weapons of mass destruction

In addition to nuclear weapons, there are other **weapons of mass destruction**:

**Chemical weapons** are weapons containing lethal chemicals that, when released, cause many deaths. In 1993, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) made the production, stockpiling and use of these chemicals illegal, worldwide. However, since then they are believed to have been used in countries such as Iraq and Syria.

**Biological weapons** introduce harmful bacteria and viruses into the atmosphere. When they enter the food chain or water supplies, they cause illness and death on a massive scale. As with chemical weapons, they are illegal but there are instances of their use and many countries still possess them.

As with nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons have the capacity to kill large numbers of people, including civilians. Although a life of a person in the military is worth the same as any other life, the rules of war allow military personnel to be valid targets. Civilians pose no threat and so they are supposed to be protected. Some people justify war by using this quote from the Bible:

“If there is a serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth . . .”

*Exodus 21:23–24 [NIV]*

This quote was originally intended to introduce a sense of proportion into the way people respond to each other. It cannot be used to justify nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. It would have to read 'many lives for a life, many eyes for an eye and a whole mouthful of teeth for a tooth'.

No religion promotes the use of weapons of mass destruction. Their reasons for opposing them reflect their individual beliefs. Buddhists believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction is an evil action that can follow a person into their next life and cause bad effects. Christians do not believe in karma but a Christian's view may be that the use of weapons of mass destruction is counter to the teachings of Jesus, who was a pacifist, and therefore wrong.

### Activities

- 1 Explain the difference between nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and biological weapons.
- 2 Do you think using any of these weapons is justified? Give your reasons.
- 3 Explain why most Christians disagree with the use of weapons of mass destruction.

### Links

Turn to page 135 for more discussion on the Exodus passage about 'an eye for an eye'.

### Contrasting beliefs

Try to learn a contrasting view from another religion about weapons of mass destruction.

### Summary

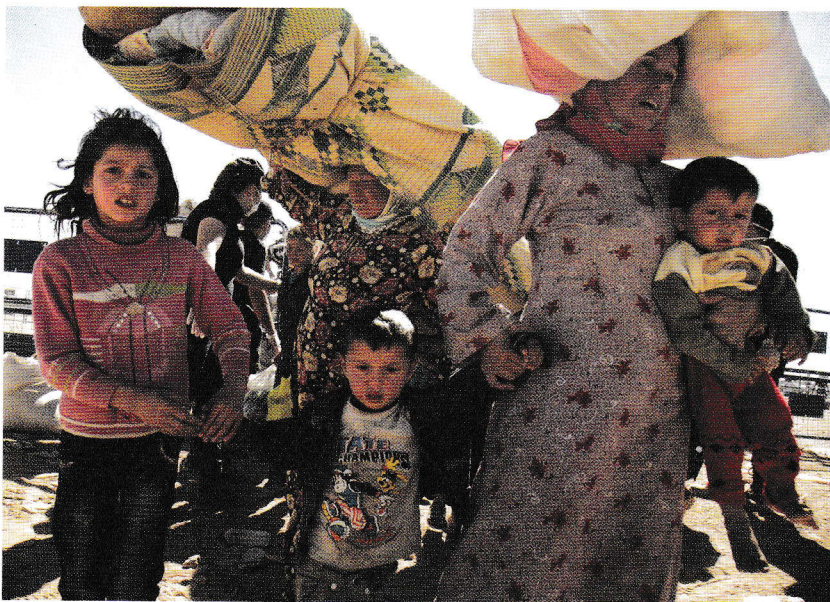
You should now be able to describe the effects of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and understand what Christians believe about their use.



### ■ The just war theory

In the fourth century St Augustine was one of the first Christians to write about the morality of war, and his thoughts were developed into a distinct set of criteria by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. Further adaptations have been made to the **just war** theory up until the present day. It seeks to lay out the conditions under which fighting a war is justifiable, and also provides rules on how the war must be fought to ensure it is ethical. All the following conditions must apply for the war to be a 'just war':

- The war must have a *just cause*. This may include self-defence or defending someone else. It must not be to gain territory or resources, or in retaliation.
- The war must be declared by the *correct authority*. This should be the government or lawful rulers of the country.
- The *intention* of the war has to be to defeat wrongdoing and promote good. The good achieved by the war must outweigh the evil that led to it.
- Fighting must be a *last resort*. All other ways of resolving the issue, such as diplomacy, must have been attempted before war can be declared.
- There must be a reasonable *chance of success*. It is unjust to ask people to fight a war if it is probable that the war will be lost and they will be killed.
- The methods used to fight the war must be *proportional* to achieve success. Excessive force should not be used.



▲ Refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war in 2015. Is it possible to fight a war without harming any civilians?

#### Objectives

- Understand the just war theory.
- Apply the just war theory to a specific war.

#### Key term

- **just war:** a war which meets internationally accepted criteria for fairness; follows traditional Christian rules for a just war, and is now accepted by all other religions

#### Discussion activity

Without looking at the information on this page, with a partner draw up a list of conditions that you think makes fighting a war the right thing to do.

#### Links

To remind yourself of the differences between self-defence and retaliation, see pages 128–29.

#### Activity

Look carefully at the conditions for a just war. Are there any other conditions that you would like to add and any that you think should be removed? Explain the reasons for your answer.

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The way the war is fought must obey the following conditions:

- The war must be fought by *just means*. Innocent people and civilians must not be targeted or harmed.
- Only *appropriate force* may be used. This includes the type of force and how much is used.
- *Internationally agreed conventions* on the conduct of war must be obeyed. The Geneva Convention, accepted by the UK government in 1957, lays down the rules that must be obeyed in war.

### Extension activity



Find out more about the Geneva Convention. Do you think such rules about the conduct of war should be kept? Explain your answer.

## Falklands War

The Falkland Islands and South Georgia are British territories off the coast of Argentina in South America. For many years, the Argentinians have believed that they should govern the islands, which they call the Malvinas. In April 1982, Argentinian forces invaded the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, claiming the islands for themselves. After organising diplomatic pressure against Argentina, the British government sent a task force to reclaim the islands, which they did in June 1982.

During the conflict, the Argentinian navy vessel ARA *General Belgrano* was sunk, killing 323 people onboard. The British vessel HMS *Sheffield* was sunk in retaliation at the cost of 20 lives. Overall, 649 Argentinian and 258 British military personnel died in the conflict. Three civilians on the islands were also killed. However the citizens of the Falklands supported the UK task force. The majority of the current population still identify themselves as British and overwhelmingly support remaining as an Overseas Territory of the UK.

Many Christians believe that although fighting a just war is acceptable, it is much better if there is no war, just or not. Working together to avoid situations where war is a possible outcome is preferable to fighting. The United Nations, founded in 1945, encourages countries to resolve disputes peacefully. Some Christians disagree with the theory of a just war because it defends the concept of war in certain circumstances. This could lead to a general acceptance of war.

### ★ Study tip

Learning the words in italics on these pages may help you to remember the just war conditions.



▲ This sculpture is outside the United Nations building in New York City. What do you think its message is?

### Activities

- 1 From what you have read, do you think the Falklands War was a just war?
- 2 'It is acceptable to do anything to win a war if it ultimately leads to a better outcome.' Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your opinion.

### Summary

You should now know the criteria for a just war and have used the criteria to judge whether a specific war was just.



## 6.6

# Holy war and religion as a cause of violence

### What is a holy war?

To many people the concept of a **holy war** seems to be a contradiction. They think that no activity that involves killing people in large numbers can possibly have any religious inspiration or justification. However, in the Old Testament, there are many references to God helping the Jews to establish themselves in the Promised Land by winning bloody



▲ Christians defending the walls of the city of Acre in 1291

battles. In the Crusades (battles between Christians and Muslims in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries), both sides believed that God was helping them to win.

For Christians, a holy war must be authorised by a religious leader with great authority. The purpose of it should be to defend the Christian faith from attack. Those who take part believe they will gain spiritual rewards, and if they die in battle they will go straight to heaven.

The concept of holy war does not feature widely in current Christian belief, but that does not mean that Christians are happy to see their faith attacked. Christians will still stand up for their faith but are much more likely to use the power of argument than military strength.

### Religion as a cause of violence in the UK

In the UK, most Christians do not see the need to respond violently to what they perceive to be offensive to their religion or an attack on their faith. This does not mean they approve of such attacks; they just believe that Christian teachings do not encourage a violent response.

### Objectives

- Understand the features of a Holy War.
- Consider whether religion is a cause of war and violence.
- Understand Christian approaches to war and violence.

### Key term

- **holy war:** fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader

### Activities

- 1 Explain the features of a holy war.
- 2 Why do you think many Christians do not agree with the idea of a holy war?
- 3 How far do you think Christians should go to defend their faith?
- 4 Do you think it is acceptable for people to offend Christians? Explain your answer.



However, in the past there have been tensions in the UK between denominations in Christianity, especially between Protestants and Catholics. This was most recently evident in Northern Ireland during a period between 1968 and 1998 known as ‘the Troubles’. Although many consider this to have been a political conflict rather than a religious one, it led to discrimination and acts of violence against both Protestants and Catholics.

## ■ Christian beliefs about war and violence

An often quoted verse from the Old Testament is ‘eye for eye, tooth for tooth’ (Exodus 21:24), which is sometimes interpreted to mean that it is acceptable to return violence with violence. When this was first written over 3000 years ago, individual wrongs were punished by taking violent actions against the families or tribes of the offenders. The ‘eye for an eye’ teaching tried to reduce this violence by suggesting only the individuals involved should be punished and not a larger group of people, most of whom were innocent.

For most Christians, the teachings of Jesus make it quite clear that the use of violence is not justified. In Matthew’s gospel he said:

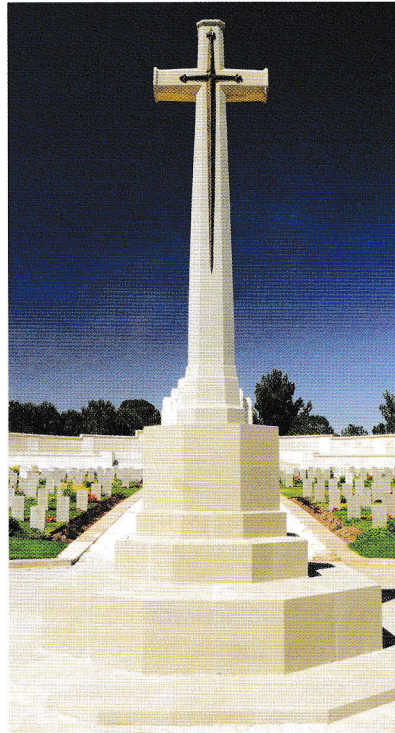
“ You have heard that it was said to the people long ago. ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement. ”

*Matthew 5:21–22 [NIV]*

On one occasion, before his arrest, Jesus advised his disciples: ‘if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.’ (Luke 22:36). Some Christians interpret this as a justification for violent resistance and wrongdoing. Jesus said this after his Last Supper with his disciples as a warning that they should be prepared for difficult and dangerous times ahead once he had left them. It is unlikely that he was suggesting they should literally arm themselves with swords to respond to any future threats with violence. Elsewhere it is written:

“ Put your sword back in its place,’ Jesus said, ‘for all who draw the sword die by the sword. ”

*Matthew 26:52 [NIV]*



▲ This monument is in the British Jerusalem War cemetery

## ★ Study tip

When considering conflicts such as the one in Northern Ireland, be aware that situations are often very complicated and involve both religious and political issues.

## Extension activity

Read the rest of Matthew 5:21–26. Carefully explain what Christians can learn from these words of Jesus.

## Activities

- 1 Do you think it is ever fair or effective for innocent people to be punished for things that other people have said or done wrong? Explain your answer.
- 2 Study the photo on this page. Write down your thoughts about the sword on the cross. Think back to the beliefs and teachings part of your course.

## Summary

You should now know the features of a holy war. You should have considered whether religion is a cause of violence, and understand Christian attitudes to war and the use of violence.



### What is pacifism?

A pacifist is a person, religious or not, who believes that war and violence can rarely or never be justified, and that conflicts should be settled in a peaceful way. Not all Christians are pacifists because many believe that war and conflict can be justified on occasions under certain criteria.

Pacifists strongly believe that it is best to work at preventing war from becoming a possibility. Promoting justice and human rights is an important part of this. If people are not denied basic freedoms and rights, they are less likely to engage in conflict. Peace is not just an absence of war; it is a sense of wellbeing and security. Christian pacifists believe this can come through religious faith, supported by prayer and meditation. Being at peace with oneself helps people to avoid conflict with others. Many Christian pacifists take their inspiration from the teaching of Jesus:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

*Matthew 5:9 [NIV]*

Christian pacifists believe that to be a pacifist is to follow the way of Jesus. Islam is a religion which advocates peace. However, it is not a pacifist religion.

### Pacifism in the First and Second World Wars

There were some people who refused to fight in the First and Second World Wars and faced punishment as a result. These people were called conscientious objectors. Many who refused to fight joined the war effort in other non-combat roles, such as doctors, nurses, cooks and mechanics. These were often dangerous jobs and some lost their lives, but they died knowing that their war effort did not involve killing other people.

One of the groups who volunteered to do this type of work in both wars was the Friends' Ambulance Unit. This was founded by the Religious Society of Friends, more commonly known as the Quakers, a Christian denomination.

#### Research activity

Find out more about the Quakers and their Peace Testimony.



▲ A dove is a well-known symbol of peace

#### Objectives

- Consider pacifism as an alternative to conflict.
- Understand why some Christians are pacifists.
- Know about the work of a Christian pacifist organisation and a Christian peacemaker

#### Key terms

- **pacifism:** the belief of people who refuse to take part in war and any other form of violence
- **peacemaker:** a person who works to establish peace in the world or in a certain part of it
- **peacemaking:** the action of trying to establish peace

#### Links

To remind yourself of the criteria for justifying war, read about the just war theory on pages 132–33. Turn back to page 130 to remind yourself of the CND and also the CCND.



▲ This 'peace sign' was originally designed as the logo for the British CND



### Contrasting beliefs

Use the Internet or library to find out more about a contrasting view from another religion about pacifism.

### Discussion activity

'Promoting justice and human rights is an effective way of preventing conflict.' With a partner, discuss whether you think this statement is correct.

## The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship (APF) is a Christian pacifist group linked to the Anglican Church. They have around 1400 members in over 40 countries, but most of them are in the UK. They believe that peace and justice should be brought about through non-violent means. As a Christian group they have three main pacifist beliefs:

- Jesus' teaching is incompatible with the waging of war
- the Christian Church should never support or justify war
- Christian witness should include opposing the waging or justifying of war.

APF founded the Week of Prayer for World Peace in 1974, and continues to have close ties with it. In addition, they produce regular newsletters, organise

and contribute to special peace-related events and religious services, and work to raise awareness of the issue of pacifism.

All members of APF have to be members of the Anglican Church and must agree with the following pledge:

“ We believe that as Christians we are called to follow the way of Jesus in loving our enemies and becoming peacemakers. We work to transform our Anglican Communion and the world to overcome those factors that lead to war within and between nations. ”

### ■ A modern peacemaker

In 1976, Mairead Corrigan, a Catholic from Northern Ireland, together with Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown, became **peacemakers** when they formed the 'Peace People' organisation. They organised peace marches throughout the UK that gave people the opportunity to show they wanted peace, rather than the violence and killings that were a tragic feature of Northern Ireland at that time. Mairead and Betty were awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for their **peacemaking** activities. After the Northern Ireland Troubles were largely resolved and peace returned to the country, Mairead Corrigan became a tireless worker for world peace and human rights.

### Extension activity

Using the Internet, find more about Mairead Corrigan and the Peace People. Write a paragraph about their main achievements.

### ★ Study tip

Try to describe the meaning of pacifism in your own words and explain why some Christians are pacifists, as well as what another religion teaches about pacifism.

### Activities

- 1 Do you agree with pacifism? Explain your answer.
- 2 Should pacifists be expected to fight in a war? Give your reasons.
- 3 Is being involved in a non-combat role a reasonable alternative to fighting?
- 4 Pacifists believe that peace and justice should be brought about through non-violent means. Explain how you think peace and justice could be brought about through non-violent means.

### Summary

You should now be able to explain the concept of pacifism, and understand why some Christians are pacifists. You should also know about a Christian pacifist organisation and a Christian peacemaker.



### ■ Providing help to victims of war

Casualties are an unavoidable part of war. In addition to the harm that is caused to those directly involved in the fighting, harm is also caused to their families and friends. For example, if the main wage earner dies in a war, their family may struggle financially without them. If a place of work is destroyed in a war, nobody can earn a wage there. If crops are destroyed or water supplies polluted, starvation could follow for those who live in the surrounding area.

In the UK if a member of the military is killed or injured, financial systems are in place to look after those left behind. Injured military personnel receive free health care, with some specialised care being provided by charities such as Help for Heroes. However, injury or death still has devastating effects on friends and families and can cause long-term emotional wounds.

There are many organisations that offer help and care for victims of war, wherever they live and whichever side of the conflict they fought on. These organisations believe that the life and welfare of human beings is all that matters.

Many Christians support such organisations because a basic Christian belief is to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). Jesus explained this to his followers by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). The meaning he was conveying is that everybody is everybody else's neighbour, regardless of race, age, gender, religion or political beliefs.



▲ This shelter in Greece, run by the Catholic organisation Caritas, feeds hundreds of refugees and migrants daily

#### Objectives

- Understand what can be done to help victims of war.
- Understand the work of a present-day Christian organisation that helps victims of war.

#### Activities

- 1 Explain the possible effects war can have on a country that is involved and the people who live there.
- 2 What support do you think volunteer groups can offer victims of war?
- 3 'The point of war is to kill the enemy, not help them to survive.' Write arguments both for and against this statement.

#### Research activity

Read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and the conversation before and after it. Write down two ways in which this parable might inspire Christians to help victims of war.



## ■ Caritas

Caritas is a Catholic organisation whose mission is to serve the poor and promote charity and justice throughout the world. They are inspired by the teachings of Jesus and the Church, providing a practical response to those suffering through conflict by saving lives and relieving suffering.

In 2015, Caritas provided food and shelter for refugees fleeing war in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians, many of whom were elderly or children, made a perilous journey to European countries like Greece. As well as food and shelter, Caritas provided translators and legal services for the refugees, so they would know their rights and options in order to make informed decisions about their futures.

## ■ Christian Aid

One of the largest Christian organisations that helps victims of war is **Christian Aid**, which was set up in the 1940s. They aim to bring aid to end poverty, whatever the cause or circumstance. War and conflict often cause poverty and so Christian Aid's work with victims of war, including refugees, is an important part of what they do. They operate under the slogan: 'We believe in life before death'.

In addition to working with victims, Christian Aid also aim to eliminate the causes of poverty. In the case of war, they work to establish basic human rights and fairness in society, in the hope that wars will not be seen as necessary. They support local organisations because they believe that local people, well provided for, are likely to be the best people to deal with problems. Recent campaigns have included raising awareness of refugees in and from Gaza, Afghanistan and Syria, in order to raise funds to offer practical support.



▲ A Christian Aid Week banner outside a church

Christian Aid's main fundraising activity is Christian Aid Week. This occurs in May each year. Special envelopes are distributed to homes in the UK and then collected with a donation inside. Christian Aid also receive regular or one-off donations from the public, and support from the UK government and European Commission.

### Activities

- 1 Explain how Christian Aid helps victims of war.
- 2 Do you agree with the quote on this page from Christian Aid? Explain your answer.
- 3 Do you think Christian organisations like Caritas and Christian Aid should help anyone who needs help, or should they help only Christians? Give reasons based on Christian teaching.

### Links

To read more about Christian Aid, turn to Chapter 2, page 63.

“ The need to address the root causes of refugee flows and the migration of the desperate – conflict, inequality, and the impacts of climate change, to name but three – has never been greater. ”

*Christian Aid*

### Research activity

Visit the Christian Aid website to find out more about the work that Christian Aid do for victims of war.

### ★ Study tip

Remember to refer to Christian teaching that reflects Christian beliefs about helping victims of war.

### Summary

You should now know about and understand support given to victims of war, including the work of Christian Aid.



## Religion, violence, terrorism and war – summary

You should now be able to:

- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about the meaning and significance of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation
- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about violence, including violent protest
- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about terrorism
- ✓ explain reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation and Christian belief and teachings about these
- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about the just war theory, including the criteria for a just war
- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about Holy War.

## Religion and belief in twenty-first century conflict – summary

You should now be able to:

- ✓ explain attitudes to the use of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, including Christian beliefs
- ✓ examine religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world
- ✓ explain Christian beliefs and teachings about pacifism and peace-making, including the work of individuals influenced by Christian teaching
- ✓ explain Christian responses to the victims of war, including the work of one present day religious organisation
- ✓ explain contemporary British attitudes (both religious and non-religious) towards all of the above issues
- ✓ explain contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society to the three issues of violence, weapons of mass destruction and pacifism, with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions.

### Sample answer – the 12 mark question

1. Write an answer to the following examination question:

'The best way to bring about world peace is for more individuals to become pacifists.'

Evaluate this statement.

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

2. Read the following student sample answer:

*"I disagree with this statement because if people become pacifists, they will make themselves easy targets for their enemies. If you are fighting for a cause or for your country, it is safest to attack the easiest targets. This will achieve nothing. The best way to bring about world peace is to take on those who threaten peace and defeat them. Peace will follow once those who threaten war are removed from the scene. The Bible supports this point of view. The Book of Exodus tells Christians that if someone suffers a serious injury, 'you should take a life for a life, an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth'. This makes it clear that retaliation is the right thing to do. Fighting is a natural part of what it means to be human and this is how humans have survived. The Church supports war, regiments have chaplains, there are many Christians in the military and there are special services on Remembrance Sunday when people who fought in wars are remembered and honoured.*



## Twenty-first century

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However some people think differently. When Jesus was asked about retaliation, he said that if someone strikes you on one cheek you should turn the other cheek and let them hit that rather than hitting them back. This may work in some situations but in some others it could end rather badly. Pacifists trust that if you do not pose a threat to people, they will leave you alone and this may work but people like Hitler would probably just see it as a sign of weakness and take advantage.

Real pacifism is more than refusing to fight though. True pacifists love their neighbour and work hard at making sure they live in peace and don't upset people or make them feel the need to retaliate. They actually work at establishing peace by getting on with everybody. If this is what a pacifist really does then maybe the statement could be true although it will have to be worked at. Jesus was probably a pacifist but died a violent death. Certainly the more pacifists there are, the fewer people there are left to fight so maybe it is true."

3. With a partner, discuss the student answer. Can you identify two different points of view? Are they contrasting? Does it contain religious arguments? If so, are they simple or detailed? How accurate are they? Can the answer be improved? If so, how?
4. What mark (out of 12) would you give this answer? Look at the mark scheme in the Introduction (AO1). What are the reasons for the mark you have given?
5. Now swap your answer with your partner's and mark each other's responses. What mark (out of 12) would you give the response? Refer to the mark scheme and give reasons for the mark you award.

### Practice questions

- 1 Which one of the following most accurately means a violent protest?  
A) Demonstration    B) Riot    C) Strike    D) March [1 mark]
- 2 Give two reasons for war. [2 marks]
- 3 Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about whether countries should possess weapons of mass destruction.

In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions.

[4 marks]

#### ★ Study tip

As you are asked to explain two contrasting beliefs, you must refer to Christianity and one other religion.

- 4 Explain two reasons why Christians should help victims of war. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. [5 marks]
- 5 'The just war theory is the best religious response to whether it is right to fight.'  
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:
  - refer to Christian teaching
  - give detailed arguments to support this statement
  - give detailed arguments to support a different point of view
  - reach a justified conclusion.[12 marks]